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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [CVIS](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [CA](#) [BM](#)  
SUBJECT: CANADA WILL KEEP UP PRESSURE ON BURMA

REF: A. STATE 146862

[1](#)B. OTTAWA 1932

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) According to Deborah Paul, Director for the Southeast Asia and Pacific Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), Canada fully shares our concern with the situation in Burma (ref a). The GOC has already increased its diplomatic efforts to put pressure on Burma, called for a special session of the Human Rights Council to consider the case, and worked in support of the appointment of Special Rapporteur Pineiro with the "right mandate," she explained. DFAIT called in the Burmese charge d'affaires to express concern, and separately convened other heads of mission here to discuss the situation. Foreign Minister Maxime Bernier wrote to the current ASEAN Chair to thank ASEAN for its strong statement on Burma, while urging ASEAN to do still more. She said that the response from Singapore was that ASEAN was "seized" with the situation but could not eject a member. Paul predicted that Canada would attempt to convince ASEAN to do more when it hosts an upcoming ASEAN meeting in Canada. The Canadian parliament also recently passed a motion to make Aung San Suu Kyi an honorary citizen of Canada (ref b). Paul underscored that her office had prepared an even longer list of options that Canada could employ to put additional pressure on Burma for review by the Foreign Minister.

[1](#)2. (C) Paul emphasized that, even before the current crisis, Canada had a number of measures in place to pressure the regime. She explained, however, that the GOC is limited in what it can do, because Canadian law governing sanctions establishes a very high threshold for allowing the government to curtail commerce. (Note: In accordance with the Special Economic Measures Act, absent a UNSC resolution, the GOC can only impose sanctions if 1) it is implementing a resolution by an international organization of which Canada is a member that calls on its members to take economic measures against a foreign state, or 2) the Canadian Governor General takes the position on advice of the federal Cabinet that a grave breach of international peace and security has occurred, which has resulted or is likely to result in a serious international crisis. End note) Beginning in 1988, the GOC cut off bilateral aid as well as commercial support for companies attempting to do business in Burma. In 1997, the GOC placed Burma on Canada's Area Control List, which requires a permit for Canadian companies to export to select countries and limits exports to humanitarian goods. The only Canadian exports to Burma of late have been HIV drugs. (The only other country on the list is Belarus, which joined Burma last year.) In 2003, Canada excluded Burma from its Least Developed Country Market Access list. The GOC has also

instituted a very restrictive visa policy for senior members of the Burmese government and military. In spring 2007, then-Foreign Minister Mackay sent a letter to the few Canadian companies known to do business in Burma urging them to curtail their activities. The GOC has also required prior approval for all travel outside Ottawa by Burmese diplomats. Canada has for many years also included in all its talks with China and India an exhortation to put pressure on the Burmese regime, Paul noted.

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13. (U) On October 24, Foreign Minister Bernier issued the following statement on the continued detention of Aung San Suu Kyi:

quote

Today, Canada calls again for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi on the 12th anniversary of her captivity. In recognition of her courageous struggle to bring freedom and democracy to Burma, Canada's Parliament voted to confer honorary citizenship on her, following a commitment by the government in last week's Speech from the Throne. We continue to call on the government of Burma to release all other political prisoners and to engage in a genuine dialogue with the democratic opposition.

Canada supports the efforts of the international community to encourage freedom, democratic development, respect for human rights and the rule of law in Burma. We welcome the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, as well as those of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro. Canada calls upon the government of Burma to facilitate their work.

end quote

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